

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

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The Curse of Imperfect Obedience

By REV. JOE HENRY HANKINS, D.D.
Little Rock, Arkansas

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—I. Sam. 15:22.

The fifteenth chapter of I Samuel is the record of Saul's rejection by the Lord because of his imperfect obedience. You will recall that when Israel was coming up out of Egypt, the first crowd that opposed them was the Amalekites. They came out with their armies in a deliberate at-



Dr. Joe Henry Hankins

tempt to destroy the people of God, knowing that they were not a war-like people and were not prepared for battle. The Amalekites were a trained, war-like nation, experienced in warfare and well-equipped for battle. They thought it would be no trouble at all to completely destroy Israel. But God intervened and gave victory to Israel and brought defeat to the Amalekites. However, God had not forgotten the sin of Amalek, and God said to Saul, the first king of Israel, 'You go on a mission for me, now; get all the armies of Israel together and go down to the country of Amalek and utterly destroy everything in that country.' In other words, 'You do to them exactly what they had planned to do to you'—another case of "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." God doesn't get in a hurry, and it may be a long time before it comes back home, but sooner or later whatever a man sows is coming home to him, somewhere down the line.

And so the time has come when
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THE ANGELS' CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

By EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they had heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."—Luke 2:7-20.

What a big book one could write on Christmas! How many sermons can be preached on holy themes from the Scriptures about the birth of our Saviour. I would like to preach a dozen sermons at Christmas time. One sermon could be on the text, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). One sermon could be upon the Old Testament prophecies of His birth, of the tribe of Judah, with a virgin mother, in the town of Bethlehem, in the fullness of time. One sermon could tell of the wise men from the East, their faith in the promises of the Scripture in Dan-

iel about the Prince, the King of the Jews, their following the Scripture and the star, their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. One sermon could be on the inn, where there was no room for Mary and Joseph. And there is enough material for many other sermons. But I want to write to you about the angels and their message to the shepherds in the fields and the blessed tidings of great joy that a Saviour was born.

I. The Angels, Heavenly Messengers

At the top of every Christmas tree, tradition says, there should be a large star or a bright shining angel. And in the minds of many, nothing will do, but an angel. For the angels had so much to do with the birth of Christ and the Christmas story. A beautifully pictured angel seems to bring back some of the awe and mystery and miracle and joy of the first Christmas when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea.

1. Consider how much the angels had to do with the birth of Christ.

First, an angel of the Lord appeared on the right side of the altar of incense in the temple, before Zacharias the priest, and foretold the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Saviour.

Then the Angel Gabriel appeared in Galilee, in the town of Nazareth, to Mary, a virgin, engaged to marry Joseph and announced to her that she would miraculously conceive a son and bring forth Jesus, the Son of God.

Then the angels of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream

and comforted his troubled heart, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."

Then the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and announced the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, and then "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God...."

Again the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, warning him to take the baby Jesus into Egypt so Herod could not destroy Him. Later, when Herod was dead, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph again in a dream, telling him to return with Mary and the baby Jesus into the land of Israel. Angels are everywhere in the Christmas story.

Small wonder, then, that angels are in Christmas carols. "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing."

Small wonder that angels appear in the pictures of the great artists who depict the sweet story of Joseph and Mary and the birth of the Lord Jesus, the story of Herod and the wise men and the shepherds.

2. There is wonderfully sweet comfort in the obvious lesson here that angels are the loving friends of mankind and appear continually to long after our happiness and joy.

Strangely enough, men seem always afraid of angels. In the events connected with the birth
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The Sweetness of Fundamentalism

By REV. WILLIAM E. TROUP

Pastor of Goss Memorial Reformed Church, Akron, Ohio

"Now abideth fundamentalism, premillennialism, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Fundamentalism is not Anti but Inter-Denominational and has for its purpose the union, encouragement, and inspiration of all Bible-believing Christians in witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ and teaching His precious Word.

Many times in history enemies of the church of God have arisen, and just as often the Lord has lifted up a standard against them. Modernism is doubtless the greatest enemy that has raised its ugly head against the Christian church. In the days of Tom Paine, Robert Voltaire, and Robert Ingersoll, infidelity and atheism bombarded the church from the outside; today modernism is inside our churches, colleges and seminaries, suavely and diplomatically stealing these institutions from our very grasp. They have entered by the "wooden horse" method.

Fundamentalists, of both the ministry and laity, are banding together to destroy this enemy within the sacred gates and to preserve the pure preaching and teaching of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Agreeing to Differ
The fundamentalist has no quar-

rel with the modernist:

Except that the modernist desecrates the fundamentalist's Bible;

Except that he denies the divine conception and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ;

Except that he denies that Jesus



Dr. Wm. E. Troup

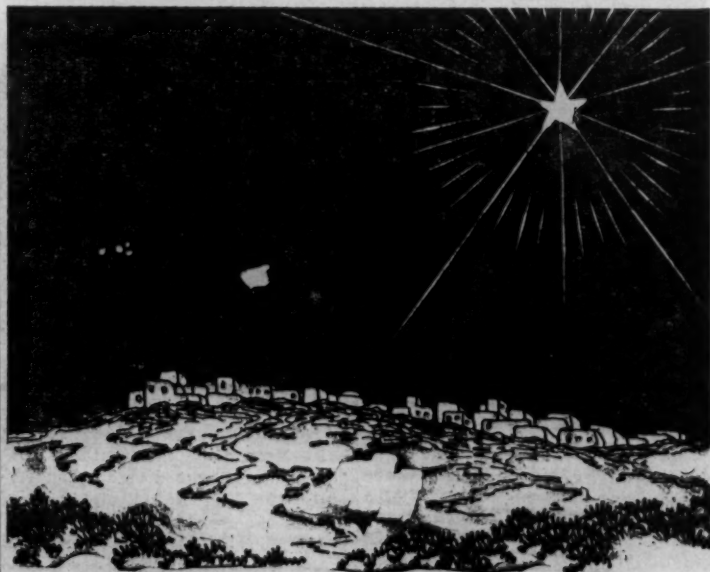
Christ is very God as well as very man;

Except that he denies the bodily resurrection of Him who said,
(Continued on Page 2)

Sword Book Club Members, Notice!

The SWORD BOOK CLUB NEWS is in this issue, on page 8. Be sure to see details about the January selection, "I Was Born Again," by Norman Wingert, and the two fine alternates. Read it carefully; if you do not want this book to come to you automatically you must clip out and mail the Substitution Blank to reach us not later than January 9.

If you are not a member of the Sword Book Club, we invite you to look over the Book Club News. If you'd like to have the book, order it, enclosing \$2.00, and we will gladly send it. Or better yet, turn to the coupon on page 7 and become a member of the Sword Book Club, and get all the benefits of buying your books this convenient, safe way.



The Sweetness of Fundamentalism

(Continued from Page 1)

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up";

Except that he denies that salvation is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than by character building;

Except that he denies that Jesus Christ is coming again for His saints and to set up His kingdom and reign upon the earth during the earth's golden age.

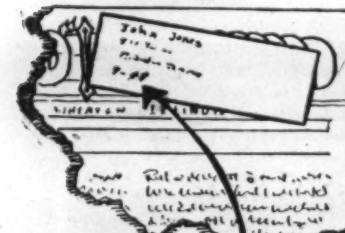
Aside from the above, there are many other minor and major differences.

I hold no brief for the fundamentalist except that he honors both the written living Word and the resurrected and ascended living Word of God and seeks always to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ in his message. I wish the exaltation of Jesus Christ by the fundamentalist were always as sweet as the denial by the modernist. The world always seems to prefer sweet modernism to sour, sarcastic, carping, contentious fundamentalism.

The Christian fundamentalist is divinely forbidden to hob-nob with the modernist or to bid him God-speed.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and

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abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."—John 9-11.

The modernist deserves our pity and prayers as well as our censure. While our heads cannot assent to his creeds, our hearts must not dissent to pray for his needs.

A university professor recently said, "I do not know if such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived; if He did, I hate him; if He were here, I would spit in His face and I could wish that the flow of saliva would never cease." Brethren, pray for them who despitely use our blessed Lord.

The Parable of the Cowbird

The cowbird never builds a nest. She waits until a bird of another specie builds her home and lays one or more eggs; then she, without invitation, lays an egg or two among the other eggs. She never sits upon the nest but allows the owner of the nest to have that privilege. When the birdlings are hatched, she does not concern herself about feeding them but leaves that responsibility with the mother of the other fledglings. Her babies are greedier than their cousins, grab more of the food that the mother bird brings home, grow faster and sturdier, and finally evict the legitimate inhabitants from the nest altogether. The unlawful tenants occupy the home from cellar to garret. They have squatter's rights to the property. They are on the inside, not because of right, but because of cleverness and might.

Modernism, agnosticism, infidelity, atheism, and the rest of their ilk never constructed anything. They do not belong to the construction crew but the destruction crew. Modernism has crept in unawares and literally stolen thousands of Christian colleges, seminaries and churches that were built through the sinew, service, sacrifice, and silver of saintly servants of the Lord who believed the whole Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.

"And now abideth faith [fundamentalism], hope [premillennialism], love; but the greatest of these is love."

1. Fundamentalism

The fundamentalist has never been accused of pussyfooting, side-stepping, or straddling; he is a contender for the faith once delivered to the saints. However, in his contending he must not be contentious. Ice can never be melted with a hammer; neither can enemies be won by an unkind, uncharitable, resentful spirit.

Modernism is bankrupt and insolvent; it has defaulted, failed, and is a man of straw; it has no vital message. Its God is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; its Bible is not God's authoritative revelation to man; its Christianity is not genuine New Testament good news given by the Lord Jesus Christ, and preached by Paul, the other apostles, and all the early Christians; its Christ is not the historic Christ of the New Testament and the glorious Lord and Saviour proclaimed by the early Church.

Fundamentalism and modernism are as far apart as the two poles, as unlike as day and night, as dissimilar as Heaven and Hell; they are absolutely irreconcilable.

As Different as Chalk From Cheese

Fundamentalism maintains that the Bible IS the Word of God, inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings and is the only rule of faith and life; modernism holds that the Bible CONTAINS the Word of God.

Fundamentalism maintains that Jesus Christ was divinely conceived by the Holy Spirit, virgin born, and is the Son of God in a sense in which no other is; modernism holds that Jesus Christ is a Son of God in the sense that all men

are, and that He was a great prophet.

Fundamentalism maintains that man was created by special fiat of God in His own image and likeness; modernism holds that man is the product of evolution and is ever on the ascent from dust to deity.

Fundamentalism maintains that man sinned and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death and that apart from God's redeeming grace, he is hopelessly and helplessly lost; modernism holds that man is the unfortunate victim of environment and circumstances but that through self-culture he will yet save himself.

Fundamentalism maintains that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is expiatory, that His death was a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood; modernism holds that the death of Jesus Christ is exemplary.

Fundamentalism maintains that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, that the believer is baptized by one Spirit into the body of Christ, that he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and that he is eternally secure in Christ; modernism holds that man is justified by his own good works in following Christ's example.

Famous Fundamentalists

Jesus was a Fundamentalist because He believed in His own deity. "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

John the Baptist was a Fundamentalist because he believed in the substitutionary suffering of the Saviour. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Peter was a Fundamentalist because he believed in the Messiahship and deity of Jesus Christ. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

The Apostle John was a fundamentalist because he believed in the eternalness of the Lord Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (John 1:14).

Thomas was a Fundamentalist because he believed Jesus to be God. "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Paul was a Fundamentalist because he believed the Lord Jesus Christ was the sinner's Goel (Redeemer). "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Daniel was a Fundamentalist because he believed that prayer is not a monologue but a dialogue, that God hears and answers prayer; therefore he practiced prayer as "he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Dan. 6:10).

Abraham was a Fundamentalist because he "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3).

II. Premillennialism

Premillennialism is the Scriptural doctrine of the blessed hope of the church and the golden age of Christ's kingdom and reign upon earth. The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is a drama in two acts, with a seven-year intermission.

The first act is the return to the air of our blessed Lord for all the living and dead saints. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Believers are not looking for the undertaker, they are expecting the Uppertaker; they are not looking for signs, but listening for

sounds—the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

The Scriptures call the intermission, "The Great Tribulation." It is "The Time of Jacob's Trouble." It is the most awful period in the history of the human race. The Church will have been caught up, the Holy Spirit who has restrained the flood of evil will be taken out of the way, and the world will be left under the power of Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. God have mercy on the souls of men who deliberately choose to pass into the Great Tribulation with the Satanic trinity rather than into the air with our blessed Lord and His bride.

At the close of the intermission, the second act of the drama will begin. The Lord Jesus Christ will return in power and great glory with His saints to rule over the earth during the 1,000 years of the world's Golden Age. "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7). "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17).

The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire. In Revelation 20:2, 3 we read that an angel from Heaven "laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, [Pit of the Abyss], and shut him up, and set a seal upon him."

Before the millennium can be ushered in, Satan must be ushered out. The reign of the prince of this world must end before the reign of the Prince of Peace can begin. The earth will enjoy 1,000 years without a Devil. Every knee shall bow to Christ; righteousness shall cover the earth; peace shall prevail. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4).

The Jews, the people of the restless feet, who have been hounded over the face of the earth, wanted by none, tolerated by few, and abused by many, shall see God's promises to them fulfilled in toto.

Wild beasts shall be as tame as the poodle dog or the Persian cat. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9). The very ground, which was cursed because of man's sin, shall have that curse removed. Thistles and thorns will be only a memory to farmer and gardeners.

Key to Scriptures

The premillennial coming of the Lord is the only key that unlocks every room in the treasure house of sacred truth. Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health" is a key to the Scriptures; however, it can be used only for locking up the Scriptures and never for unlocking.

No one can intelligently study and understand the Scriptures, unless he has a working knowledge of the doctrine of the premillennial coming of Christ. The truth of the return of the Lord is part and parcel of the great body of divine truth. If Christ should not return to earth, there would be no resurrection, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-

angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16); "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5). If Christ should not return to earth, there would be no rewards for service, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). If Christ should not return to earth, there would be no redemption of the body. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11).

History might well be spelled "His Story" for it is simply the record of fulfilled prophecy; prophecy is history written in advance. The three mountain peaks of history that tower far above all others are:

First, the first advent of the Lord Jesus, including His divine conception and virgin birth, His sinless life, His substitutionary death, His bodily resurrection, and His glorious ascension.

Secondly, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of the promise, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17).

Thirdly, the return of Christ to reign upon the earth. The first two were literally fulfilled to the very letter. Is it not reasonable to expect that the third will be a literal return? There are twenty times as many references in the Old Testament to His second coming as there are to His first coming. The blood is mentioned 336 times in the whole Bible, while the second coming is referred to 338 times in the New Testament alone. His return is mentioned 25 times as often as the cross and 15 times as often as the resurrection. One in every 20 verses in the New Testament speaks of His second coming.

The last promise of the Bible is, "Surely, I come quickly," and the last prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Satan has veiled one of the most precious truths of the Lord's Supper, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

They Expected Him

The hope of the imminent return of Christ dominated the life of the early Christians. Their missionary zeal and willingness to sacrifice and suffer can be understood only in the light of that expectation. This doctrine motivated their daily living. "Occupy," said Jesus. How long? "Till I come." "Hold fast." How long? "Till I come." "Judge nothing." How long? "Till I come." "Show forth the Lord's death." How long? "Till I come." "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). The most purifying of the doctrines, except the cross, is the coming of the Lord.

Zwingli, Luther, Calvin, Knox, the Wesleys, Ridley, Latimer, Baxter, Whitefield, Moody, Chapman, the Gordons, G. Campbell Morgan, Torrey, John MacNeil, Gray, Sunday, etc.; a great host of evangelists, Bible teachers, pastors, and laymen have looked for "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). This expectation sanctified and purified their daily lives.

A School-Room Anecdote

A superintendent of schools visited a certain room and offered a prize for the best kept, tidiest desk upon his return. After he had gone the children began to ask, "When will he come back?" No one had heard him say. One little girl said, "I am going to win the prize." The other children laughed for her desk was always a jumble. "But," she said, "I will clean it up at the beginning of every week." The children replied, "He may come at the end of the week." "Well," she said, "I will clean it up every morning." They replied, "He may come in the late afternoon." She meditated a few moments and then said, "I'll tell you what I am going to do. I will clean it up every day." (Continued on Page 3)

The Sweetness of Fundamentalism

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to do; I will clean it up now and then keep it clean." The immediacy of the return of Christ has that kind of purifying effect in the Christian's life.

ILL LOVE

It is absolutely essential that one be a Fundamentalist, for "a man broken away from the great fundamentals is like a tree blasted in the desert"; it is necessary that one be a premillennialist if he would rightly divide the Word of truth and carefully present it to a lost and needy world; but these things are worthless unless they are maintained in LOVE.

The Church suffers most from its misrepresentatives. There are entirely too many Christianettes who do not "adorn the doctrine of God in all things." There is plenty of LOVE in books; what we need above every thing is LOVE in boots.

Love is the very essence of God, for "God is love." No man has ever fully comprehended or even estimated the love of God. It is like a bottomless ocean without shores. Its reaches are as far as the east from the west.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,

Were every stalk on earth a quill,

Were all the sky of parchment made,

And every man a scribe by trade,

To write the love of God above,

Would drain the ocean dry;

Nor could the scroll contain the whole

Though stretched from sky to sky.

The love of God is the brightest rainbow that ever arched the human sky. God's love is the greatest, grandest, most glorious asset in human experience.

The corollary of the fact that God is love is the parallel fact that this love is shed abroad in the hearts of the children of God. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:7, 11).

Love surpasses everything. It is far better than any gift. Prophecy, the understanding of all mysteries, possessing all knowledge and mountain-moving faith, giving to the point of poverty, and even martyrdom, are valueless without love. God looks for love in every fundamental, pre-millennial Christian. Loving is conformity to God.

Love's Earmarks

Love does not envy; envy is Satanic. Love never seeks the applause of men, only the approval of God. Love's ornaments are meekness, modesty, and self-effacement. Love neglects self in its interest and devotion to others. Love is not hypersensitive. Love does not impute evil; rather it prefers to hide it. The gifts of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will cease and pass away. Love—never. It is the greatest of all and will abide eternally.

Love is not a theory, an hypothesis; it is a practical course of action and way of life. It manifests itself in lip and life, in talk and walk. A woman remarked that even the family cat was aware of the conversion of her husband. That is practical Christianity. On a monument of modest proportions in a cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio, is this inscription: "She was very pleasant." It ought to be possible to pay that compliment to every Christian.

As Sweet as Stephen Merritt During the wave of depression in 1893, Stephen Merritt, a Christian philanthropist of New York City, threw himself into a great effort to feed the hungry.

He operated chiefly through the existing missions, which were situated in the poorer districts. At different centres he instituted "Free Breakfasts" and got the mission workers to open soup kitchens, while he paid the bills.

It was his custom from day to day to visit the different missions

that were distributing food in order to see how things were going.

Picture him one morning as he went to one of the missions where they were dispensing free breakfasts at his expense. The hall was full of hungry men. Mr. Merritt made his way through the rough crowd up to the front, where the mission workers were preparing breakfast. He always wore a high silk hat and a Prince Albert coat.

When he reached the front and greeted the workers he took his "topper" and turned it upside down upon the little portable organ. Then he took off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and was soon as busy as anyone, handing out rolls and serving coffee to the hungry men. It took some time to satisfy his large family; but as the task was about finished, the superintendent of the Mission went back to Mr. Merritt, who was still busy serving coffee, and said, "Mr. Merritt, I am sure the men would welcome a little word from you this morning."

Reaching the front of the hall he turned around to face the men, at the same time resting his hand upon the little folding organ. As he did so, his eye lighted upon his hat—and something more!

While the workers had been busy at their task, the rough crowd at the front had thrown into that high silk hat the ends of their rolls, crumbs and crusts of bread. They had also made it a receptacle for their coffee grounds. And when they had it filled to the top with bread and coffee, they smothered it over into a soft mush.

That was the picture that caught his eye as he gazed in his mind for his "point of contact" that morning. What would he say to these men?

Here he was, giving time and strength and all the money he possessed to feed these men. He even involved his business for them. To satisfy their hunger he was prepared to go to extreme lengths. And then, when they had appeased their appetites at his expense, they took the surfeit, turned it into an insult and injury and gave it back as a joke.

Mr. Merritt looked down at the hat, and then at the faces of those expectant men and—smiled!

And the audience got his text from the radiance that rippled out with his first sentence and spread all over that face. His sermonette really had no text. It was simply a "get acquainted" address. It led off something like this: "Men! I am glad to be here with you this morning and to get to know you. I feel that I do know you. We have become acquainted in this last hour. We are all at home this morning."

"I wish the people who live on Fifth Avenue (at that time New York's aristocratic street) would only come and get to know you. You know, they think that when a fellow has struck hard times and is out of work and has to move down to a poorer district, he ceases to be a gentleman. They get the idea that clothes make the man; that when he can't afford to get his pants pressed a man has lowered his character. But they don't know you."

"Why, if we had the kind of crowd here this morning that they suppose would come, ill-mannered and uncouth, they would have been throwing the crusts of bread around and emptying the coffee grounds on the floor, and these dear mission workers would have had a bad mess to clear up afterwards. But you have been so thoughtful and gentlemanly in your behavior. You have gathered things together so carefully (and his eye glanced down to that hat with a merry twinkle). And on behalf of the mission workers I thank you for your consideration." At this point there was a pause, as though the speaker were collecting his thoughts ere the sermon continued:

"But, men, when a man is in hard circumstances, when he is up against it, perhaps through no

CORRECTION

The price of "AM About the Bible" is \$2.00 instead of \$1.75 as advertised in the December 5 Sword of the Lord.

Also, the demand for this fine book has been so large that we have used all of the supply available from the publisher, so no more orders can be accepted at the present time.

fault of his own, he does need a friend. And I want to commend to you One who has been my best Friend. He saved me when I was lost, and as a Saviour and Friend there is no one like Him. Men, you need Him. Take Him. He will come into your heart and life to stay, if you will receive Him."

Then he prayed very earnestly for the men and pronounced the benediction.

It seemed hard for the men to line out that morning. As for those at the front—they slunk out looking mean and ashamed.

As the door closed on the last, the mission workers turned to Mr. Merritt so mortified that they didn't know what to say. But he laughed, treated the incident as a joke, and said that the matter was easily rectified. "Just dump the whole out in the back lane and the hat will wipe out all right." And then he sought to encourage them in their difficult task. While he was speaking, the door of the mission opened and a string of men lined in and, with heads down, walked up to the front. There they stood with their hats in their hands, looking the picture of misery. Finally one acted as spokesman for the crowd.

"Mr. Merritt, we used you dirty mean this morning. No one ever acted more contemptibly than we did to you. We've come in to say how sorry we are and ask you if you can forgive us. And then, Mr. Merritt, we would like to know your Saviour. We men would like to be saved."

When that group of hardened men knelt in that Mission and found Christ that morning, it was not because they listened to a great sermon, neither was it the thunders of the law that broke them, nor the selection of touching incidents and moving sentiments. It was the manifestation of grace in the life of God's servant that enabled him to "rejoice always."

A man may stand like a Gibraltar for all the doctrines of the Bible, he may be an ardent believer and expectant lover of the coming of the Lord, but unless he maintains them in love, he has shorn himself of his most winning way with men.

Love Is Not Optional

Jesus insists on love in His followers to the extent that He gave a new commandment regarding it. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). The early Christians took the new commandment so seriously that the heathen observed, "See how the Christians love." The new affection for the Lord Jesus Christ will yield love in the life of the new creature. Paul writes to Thessalonians as follows: "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4:9).

And So—

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. The Apostle Paul said: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). Whatever other marks the fundamentalist bears, he must be marked by love, gentlemanliness, sweet reasonableness and Christ-behavior.

He will never trim the gospel; the word "compromise" is not in his vocabulary; he will "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," but he will not be contentious. He will not win so much by argumentation as by affection; not so much by syllogism as by sympathy and sweetness. He will not be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" but will be determined "not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified." He will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, he will glorify the Father, and he will seek to bring men to Christ.

The Curse of Imperfect Obedience

(Continued from Page 1)

God sends Saul on a mission for Him, and that mission is to utterly destroy the nation of Amalek—every man, woman and child, even to the tiny babies—all of them, all of their property, every head of cattle. Everything is to be utterly destroyed. So Saul gets his army together and goes down and joins battle with Amalek, and God gives the victory.

But instead of doing the thing just like God had commanded, Saul conceived the idea of taking the king back home to show him off and have a big victory celebration. "Saul and the people spared Agag (the king), and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good," and they said, "We will go back home and make a great sacrifice to our God." As they went along, they came first to Ramah. They set up a place and made a sacrifice at Ramah and started down to Gilgal to make a big sacrifice at Gilgal—a great celebration. But God said to Samuel, "Go meet Saul and tell him that because of his failure to obey, I am through with him and his family as a kingly line, forever. He is rejected from being king and I am going to set up another in his stead." All night long Samuel, one of the greatest men of God that ever lived, was on his face praying to God to spare Saul. But not even the intercession of Samuel prevailed. God told him what to do. Saul knew exactly what God wanted, and he refused to do as God had commanded.

My subject this morning is "The Curse of Imperfect Obedience." Now I am sure, from the words of Saul, that he felt he had done a fine job for the Lord. In his own heart he was proud of himself. I can see him as his chest swells with pride, coming back in great triumph. Over at Ramah he had set up an altar and made a great sacrifice to the Lord and has given God the credit for the victory. Somebody will say, "Why isn't that enough?" I am sure that Saul thought it was enough. In fact, I think Saul said to himself, "This is even a better way than God said. We will give God all the glory and present the best and finest of the sheep, the fattest of the cattle, and we will make a great sacrifice unto the Lord. We will call all the people together for a great celebration and sacrifice—what a big impression it will make on the people!" Some people say Saul had kept the cattle for himself. Now there is no intimation whatever in the Scripture that Saul wanted them for himself. On the other hand, he was going down to Gilgal to make a sacrifice to the Lord. He had already shown that his intention was to sacrifice the spoils to the Lord in the presence of the people in a great celebration and probably to stage a triumphant parade, leading King Agag along behind.

God sent Samuel to tell Saul that he had disobeyed God, and even as Samuel told him he said, "No, I haven't. I have obeyed the Lord—I have done what He told me to do. I went on the mission just as the Lord said. I led the armies against Amalek and destroyed Amalek and left the country in waste—here's the king to prove it. The people suggested that we bring the spoils back home to make a sacrifice to the Lord." Now I believe that he intended to do that very thing. I am sure he felt in his heart that he had done a good job for the Lord. Then why isn't that all right? Because God had commanded otherwise, and there is no substitute for obedience to the commands of God. Nothing short of complete obedience will satisfy the Lord. You cannot substitute any-

thing for obedience. I care not how good your intentions are; I care not if you do it for the glory of God; I care not if it is for a sacrifice to God; if you are not doing the thing as God said to do it, then all your sacrifices and fat of rams burned on the altars and the spoils offered to God are not acceptable to God, because they are not in accordance with the commands of God. Without obedience nothing else will do. When will people realize that! How many of us, like Saul, feel that if we are doing a fair job of living up to the requirements of the Lord, doing a fair job of keeping God's commandments, coming up to the average of the rest of Christian people, that is enough. And, if we happen to be a little above the average of the rest of the Christian people, we feel we are doing a wonderful job for the Lord, when maybe we are falling far short of the commandments and the requirements of the Lord!

I want you to think with me this morning on some of the vital things in connection with complete obedience to the will and command of the Lord.

I. God's Right to Implicit Obedience

I raise this question: Does God have the right to demand implicit obedience to every command He gives? Does God have the right to expect and demand perfect obedience to every command of His? Has God made allowance for our failures and shortcomings? Does God have the right to demand and to expect that I render to Him perfect obedience? I say, Yes. Then I raise the question, Why does He have that right?

1. Because He Is God

Now the Lord who created the universe, the God who sits on the throne of the universe, the God who has "all power in heaven and in earth," if that God is what we believe He is; if He is what the Bible teaches that He is, the very fact that He is God means that He has the right to command and the right to expect implicit obedience—unquestioned obedience on the part of His subjects. Who am I to presume to know better than God what is best for me? Who am I to have the audacity to question the wisdom and the judgment of God? If God commands, He is right. If God has a plan, it is right. If God gives the orders, He cannot make a mistake. God has a plan for my life; it must be the best plan I could possibly follow. Why should I presume to believe that I can order my life better than God? Who am I to pit my judgment, wisdom, knowledge and understanding against God's when God says His knowledge is as far above mine as the heavens are above the earth. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." When I disobey God and take matters in my own hands, I am saying to God, "I know better than you, how it ought to be done."

Besides that, every commandment God gives is for my good. God loves me and He knows every step of the way I must take. I wish people would believe that when God says, "Thou shalt not," it isn't because God is trying to withhold something from us that is good for us. It is because God in His wisdom knows and understands that it isn't best for us.

I remember the first red hot stove our little girl ever saw. She had seen gas fires but not a stove like this. She thought it was the prettiest thing she ever laid her eyes on, and with glee and laughter she ran to it and wanted to grab it. Did I let her? No.

(Continued on Page 4)

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The Curse of Imperfect Obedience

(Continued from Page 3)

Because of a father's experience in life and because of a father's love for his girl and his superior wisdom, he knew what it would do. And when God says, "Thou shalt not," it is because He loves me and doesn't want me to have something that will hurt me. When God proposes a plan for me, it is for my good and is best for me because He is all wise and cannot make a mistake. God is right every time. God tells us that we don't even know what to pray for—that when we are in trouble and distress and bring our needs to the throne of grace, we don't know what to ask for. But God knows every step of the way. God knows every battle. And if I am His child; if I love Him and am following Him, then I can say, "I know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

2. Because He Has Redeemed Us

God has another right to expect us to obey His commands. He has redeemed us and saved us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. And God tells us plainly in His Book that we are not our own; "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I thank God this morning that I am not my own. Oh how I thank God that I am His child! How I thank God that He has redeemed me! Beloved, if you can say, "I am one of God's redeemed, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ—an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ," you have the greatest blessing that ever came to human life.

Think with me of the cost of redemption. Go back with me this morning to Bethlehem's manger and see the Lord of creation who spoke in the beginning and said, "Let there be," and this universe came into existence at His command. See that Lord of creation so completely empty Himself that He is in the form of a helpless little babe cradled in a cow stall. See Him then as He goes out as a young man into His ministry, despised and rejected of men, so poor that He hasn't a place to lay His head. It is the price of redemption. Then hear those words, "Ye are not your own, ye have been bought with a price." See Him go into Gethsemane's garden, and there, "being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"—the blood oozing out of every pore of His precious body and falling into the dust of Gethsemane's garden as His soul is being made an offering for sin. See Him as He is dragged like a dog from the place of prayer as they kick, scoff and beat Him. See Him as they press a crown of thorns upon His head until the blood streams down His face while He goes yonder to the cross and there they nail Him to the cross amid the mockings and jeering of the mob that stick out their tongues and wag their heads and even give Him vinegar to drink when He is dying of thirst. See Him abandoned of God and forsaken of men in order that we might be saved. Remember, "you are not your own." I say if He paid that kind of price, He has the right to command and the right to expect complete obedience.

I read a story sometime ago of slave days. Down in New Orleans they were having an auction of slaves. A rich man from the North was there when a beautiful mulatto girl was on the auction block. Men were bidding high for her. This rich man noticed the sparkle in her eyes, and believed she had the ability to really do something in the world. He began to bid for her. The bids were raised higher and higher. After a while, she was sold to this man from the North. When she realized that he was from the North she said, "I don't want to leave my people, I want to stay in the South." This man who had bought her said, "I have bought you to

set you free." He handed her the papers on which was written her freedom and told her she was free to go where she wanted to go. Did she go? No, when she realized what he had done for her, she fell down at his feet, threw her arms around his feet and said, "I want to go with you. I couldn't ask a greater privilege than to go anywhere with you. I want to be your servant as long as I live."

When I look at Calvary and hear that cry, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I remember that I am not my own. It is the price of my redemption, and I feel like falling down at the feet of Jesus and taking those nail-pierced feet into my arms and covering them with kisses and saying, "Lord, I ask no greater privilege than to go with you anywhere and to do anything you say." Paul deemed it the greatest privilege of his life to call himself "the bondsman of the Lord Jesus Christ." "Yes, Jesus Christ has the right to demand and expect implicit obedience.

II. The Curse of Imperfect Obedience

1. In Saul's case, his disobedience caused him to be rejected of the Lord. I have said I am sure that Saul thought he had done a good job for the Lord. But obedience means more than that. Obedience means complete surrender to the will of God and the plan of God. Obedience means going all the way with the Lord—not just part of the way.

God meant for us to do what He said. We have the habit of thinking that because some of the things God has commanded are not essential to salvation, we can do as we please about them and it makes no difference. But, hear me this morning! God teaches that we suffer loss for every disobedience. Read what He says in I Corinthians 3:11-15. You will find that God teaches there that the saved will suffer loss for disobedience. God says again, "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Heb. 2:2). Then remember that Jesus is coming back in His glory, and when He comes, He is coming to take vengeance upon the earth. But He also is coming to reward the saved, each "according as his work shall be."

Many people believe that because baptism is not essential to salvation it doesn't make any difference how you are baptized. Yes, it does! If God has spoken, it does make a difference how you obey, even though you are saved. God told Moses to speak to the rock and get water for the Israelites, but Moses struck it instead. What difference did it make? He got the water just the same. But you see the difference when God led Moses up on Mount Nebo and showed him the promised land. Moses would have given his whole life to have led Israel into that promised land, but God said, "Moses, you remember your disobedience—you remember that I told you to speak to the rock and you struck it instead. Moses, you can't go." Moses lost by his disobedience. He would rather have had the privilege than all the others in life. Every disobedience on the part of God's people, every transgression carries with it loss.

Some people think if they give

a part of the Lord's day to worship, they have done a fine job. But God said the whole day belongs to Him. The Lord said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse," and you haven't obeyed until you do it. You haven't fulfilled the commandment of God until you have done it as God said. Besides that, God teaches that we should not stop with the tithe, but "bring the tithes and offerings." The Bible has more to say about offerings than about the tithes. No person has fulfilled the command of God when he counts pennies in his tithe. That belongs to God. God wants us, out of the gratitude of our hearts and because of our love for Him and appreciation of His blessings to us, to bring thank offerings—love offerings to the house of God. So if you are tithing, bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse, you are just measuring out to God, penny by penny, that which belongs to Him. If you don't go any further, you are still in disobedience to God. God said, "You have robbed me . . . in tithes and offerings."

Imperfect obedience is rebellion against God—substituting one's own will for God's will. Imperfect obedience is pitting one's own judgment against God's and it is not acceptable to God. God demands perfect obedience and has the right to expect it.

III. Reward of Perfect Obedience

I mention just briefly the rewards of perfect obedience.

1. It is the key to spiritual knowledge. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

2. It is the secret of fellowship with Christ. Listen to what Christ says: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

3. It is the key to successful Christian living. God said to Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

4. It is the absolute essential to a great faith. If you will read the account of the heroes of faith, you will hear God saying about every one of them that they "did according unto all that God had commanded."

5. It alone assures the answer to prayer. I wish I had time to preach a whole sermon right here. Listen to it: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22). Then listen to Jesus, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you . . . If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love . . . Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:7, 10, 14). I say that obedience is the key that unlocks the door to answered prayer.

6. It brings the fullness of the Spirit. It brings the assurance of salvation, the joy of salvation and the power of God upon the life that will dare to walk in complete and perfect obedience, turning his back

The Angels' Christmas Message

(Continued from Page 1)

of Jesus, angels, appearing to men, had first always to comfort people and quiet their fears. Listen to the words of the angel to Zacharias, to Mary, to Joseph, and to the shepherds:

"Fear not, Zacharias . . ."—Luke 1:13.

"Fear not, Mary . . ."—Luke 1:30.

"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not . . ."—Matt. 1:20.

To the shepherds: "Fear not"—Luke 2:10.

Angels are holy and beautiful creatures, with supernatural powers and wisdom. They are not sinful, as human beings are, and they are not limited, as we are. Angels are pure enough to dwell with God and serve Him. Angels ministered to Christ after His temptation; they strengthened Him in the Garden of Gethsemane after He had prayed. An angel came down from Heaven to roll back the stone from the door of the tomb of Christ at His resurrection and sat upon it. Two angels stood by the disciples at the ascension of Christ and promised His second coming. When Jesus comes to earth to reign, He will come with clouds and with all His holy angels, the Scripture says. There are many millions of angels; "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11). They do not marry. They were not born but were created. They never die. Some angels sinned and fell and are now fallen angels reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 6). It seems that Satan himself was once an archangel, Lucifer, now fallen by his sin (Isa. 14:12).

Yet strangely enough, these marvelous heavenly beings were

on his own way and his own will and by faith striking out for God even though, like Abraham, he does not know where he is going, but with faith enough to go anywhere that God says. "Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

made for servants, servants of the saints of God! Hebrews 1:14 says, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Their business is to honor God in protection and care of His people, to please the Lord. Angels watch after us. Jacob in his dream saw a ladder and angels ascending and descending, going to and from Heaven in their business of watching after men and reporting back to God. Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." When Elisha and his servants were surrounded at Dothan by the armies of the kings of Syria, chariots and horses of fire, manned, no doubt, by angels, but unseen to natural eyes, surrounded the city and protected the prophet of God. After Elisha's prayer, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (II Kings 6:17). No wonder that Elisha said, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (II Kings 6:16). The man of God is always surrounded by unseen angels.

Jesus said of little children that "their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). Angels of God showed Hagar a well of water; fed Elijah on bread and water; blessed Jacob when he feared to meet Esau; appeared to Gideon and to Joshua to encourage them in the work of the Lord; kept the wicked prophet Baalim from his death by solemn warning; foretold to the mother and father of Samson the latter's birth. Angels are the friends of men.

I have no doubt that the stories of good fairies, once widely believed, were but the fragmentary and traditional racial memories of the ministry of angels, more common before men went so far from God. Even heathen people have such twisted, handed-down traditions.

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(Continued on Page 5)

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The Angels' Christmas Message

(Continued from Page 4)

One, thousands of soldiers told the story of the angel of Mons, France, who, they said, appeared and stopped the advance of the German armies.

Angels are the good friends of all the people of God.

Angels came and opened the prison doors and released the apostles, encouraged them to go again to preach (Acts 5:19, 20). Angels released Peter from prison in answer to prayer, the night before he was to be put to death (Acts 12:5-11).

Angels took the spirit of the poor beggar Lazarus, who died one night at the gate of the rich man, and the righteous soul of the beggar was carried to Heaven by a convoy of these heavenly messengers (Luke 16:22). Thousands of Christians on deathbeds have seen visions of angels, have heard heavenly singing and have been led by the loving, ministering, guarding angels into the presence of God!

In I Corinthians 11:10 we are told that women should not cut their hair but should have on their heads this God-given veil or covering, which is a symbol of obedience to husband and father, and that "because of the angels." Evidently angels themselves look with deepest concern upon the sins of any Christians. Possibly angels themselves might be tempted to the sin of rebellion by a rebellious spirit in a woman. At any rate, note how tenderly solicitous are the angels in their watch-care over the people of God!

3. How fitting, then, that angels should take such an active part in the best thing that ever happened for a poor, sinning, fallen accursed race!

How fitting that angels should gladly announce the coming of the Saviour. Do not ever make the mistake of thinking that this earth and its population are but an incident in the thoughts of God and the angels. Far from it! Scientists tell us that the earth is only one of the planets revolving around our sun, and that the earth is but a tiny pin point compared with the millions of suns, in countless galaxies of the heavens. But one soul is worth more than a solar system with its sun and planets and moons. The Bible plainly tells us that the sun is made to give light to the earth in the day, and the moon and stars to give light by night. The starry heavens, with their infinite masses and spaces, are incidental compared with this earth, relatively so much smaller. For on this earth God saw fit to put a race of people made in His likeness, a race now fallen but infinitely loved. And the saving of human beings and the keeping and blessing of those saved is the greatest business that even God Himself in Heaven, and Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit and all the angels of God, can occupy themselves with! Up in Heaven their attention is centered primarily on earth. The angels share the loving compassion of Christ for sinners. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). How the angels delight to see sinners converted! And how lovingly they minister to the saved!

With these things in mind, it is easy to see that when Jesus came to earth to work out the redemption of sinners, it was the one matter nearest to the heart of every angel of God.

What a stir in Heaven! Long ago, in the tents of Abraham, the servants must have talked much about the hope for return of Eliezer who had gone to receive a bride for Isaac. How gladly they welcomed the lovely Rebekah to the tent of the lamented Sara! So in Heaven, when Jesus was born on earth, all the angels of God knew that He had come to purchase Himself a bride, to redeem for Himself a people for His own endless praise and glory. Perhaps when an angel of the Lord told Zach-

arias that John was to be born and then the Saviour, every angel in Heaven wanted to have some part in telling men the great news. When the Angel Gabriel came back to report his conversation with Mary and an angel reported his comforting revelation to Joseph, all Heaven was in a hubbub, a flutter of joy! I can imagine that every angel of God pleaded: "Let me go! Let me tell it, or sing it, or only let me shine, but oh, let me have a part in telling it!" Perhaps that is why when the one angel told his story to the shepherds, "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13, 14). Every angel in Heaven wanted to have a part in the news of Christ's birth.

Oh, how the angels rejoiced that there would be a Saviour to save sinners!

II. The Thrice Blessed Shepherds

Perhaps Caesar Augustus rested uneasily in his palace bed at Rome that night. He may have been loaded down with cares of state; he may have been fired with ambition for more authority, greater income, greater honor. He may have gone heavily to sleep after drunkenness and license. Who knows? Some unexplainable compulsion had urged him to decree that every family should go to their ancestral home to be registered for taxation. I suppose he never knew that the Saviour must be born in Bethlehem and that his decree had brought Mary and Joseph there to fulfill the Scriptures. And no angel with shining garment and glorious face slipped into the palace bedroom to tell the good news of the Saviour's birth to the emperor of all the world. No heavenly, glorious, vibrant light shined through the silken, lace-dressed curtains of the golden canopied bed where Caesar lay.

In the palace of the Roman governor in Jerusalem, brutal, grasping King Herod had no heavenly visitor on the Christ-child's natal night.

In the palace of the high priest, in the homes of the members of the Sanhedrin, no angelic messenger told the best news that the world had ever heard. Priests went dully, methodically about the rites and care of the temple and did not know that this night the Saviour was born who would fulfill every temple sacrifice, who would make good every glorious promise, a Saviour who would redeem His people Israel!

It was not to the mighty, not to the rich, not to the learned, but to the shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night that the angel of the Lord appeared. Blessed, blessed shepherds!

1. Christ came to the poor and lowly.

How fitting that good news of the Saviour's birth should first be announced to shepherds, common, unlearned, poor and lowly people.

Remember that Jesus in the beatitudes said, "Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:20, 21, 24, 25). The Gospel of Matthew gives these beatitudes in slightly different words. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:3-15).

It was prophesied of Jesus before He came, that He would preach the gospel to the poor, and when John the Baptist sent to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus told the messengers to observe that "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:3, 5), as a proof

that He was indeed the promised Redeemer, as John had announced Him to be.

It was not to the religious officials that Jesus was first made known but to the common man. Later, of Jesus it would be said, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:1, 2). Later it would be said of the Saviour upon this December night in Bethlehem, that "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).

This Saviour was to be so approachable, so meek and lowly in heart that the poorest and the vilest could come to Him with assurance. Babies would cling to Him. The children would one day pave the road for his donkey steed with palm branches and shout, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:9). Zachariah, the despised publican, would seek Jesus and find Him. The woman taken in adultery would weep and call Him Lord as He forgave all her sins. The poor, despised sinner woman who had no other friends would weep over the feet of Jesus and wipe His feet with her hair and be forgiven. O thou blessed, approachable Jesus! O thou carpenter, thou poverty-stricken, despised and rejected Saviour!

I suppose the high and mighty would have had no time to visit a manger-cradle at midnight. These same cultured and wealthy and sophisticated people had had no room for Joseph and the baby's mother, so He was born on the straw of a stable. How fitting, then, that lowly shepherds should first be called to see the holy scene of the Son of God wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

Nor does this mean that the rich cannot come to Jesus. Abraham and David were rich. One is called the man after God's own heart, and the other the friend of God. We do not mean that the powerful and learned are not welcomed to adore the newborn Saviour. Queen Victoria stood as they first sang the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Oratorio, "The Messiah." And since that time cultured audiences everywhere stand during that chorus to Christ as the coronation of a king. Gladstone, the prime minister, was a devoted defender of the faith in Christ. David Lloyd George, wartime premier, was a Baptist lay-preacher and loved the Saviour. Abraham Lincoln was converted while in the presidency and was a most devoted and humble man of prayer. Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Woodrow Wilson were devoted Christians. The gospel is as good for a king as for a peasant, for a millionaire as for a pauper. But mark this fact—when the king comes to Christ, he must come as a peasant, and when the rich man comes, he must come as a pauper. When the high and mighty approach the Lord Jesus, they must become meek and lowly in heart! So Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

How blessed that the Saviour who was born in a stable should have His arrival first announced to humble shepherds in the fields, watching their flocks. Those who feel themselves great will not come to Him. Those who are self-satisfied and say that they are "rich and increased with goods and have need for nothing," will not run to such a meek and lowly Saviour. But all who know themselves to be sinners and long to be pure; all who know themselves empty of righteousness but hunger to be filled; all those who want to come for mercy and pardon instead of singing their own praises, will find the Saviour approachable! The Saviour made the way easy for all mankind when He had His coming announced to the shepherds by campfire, among the huddled flock of sheep that winter night long ago.

2. The announcement of the Saviour's birth was made to the believing, not to scoffers!

In Luke 2:15 the beautiful childlike simplicity of the faith of these shepherds is shown. We are told: "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away

Dr. Bob Jones, Founder of Bob Jones University, Greenville, S. C., Says:

Recently, a friend wrote: "I am thoroughly in sympathy with the wonderful work you are doing. The enclosed check is part of what I saved up while I was a backslider and superintendent of Sunday School in a modernistic church." When we read this letter, it occurred to us that there are many of you Christian people who read our appeals who are contributing financially to programs and wondering when you make the contribution, "Is this program orthodox?" You can support financially Bob Jones University and know that every cent contributed will be used for the training of orthodox, consecrated, intelligent, Christian leaders. We Christian people are going to answer to God some day for the way we use the money the Lord puts into our hands.

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ed States but also in other countries. Remember Bob Jones University is not only an educational institution with high academic standards but is an aggressive, fighting base for old-time orthodoxy. Our young people do not only learn what modernism is, and they are not just orthodox, but they go out from Bob Jones University with a consuming zeal for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It will soon be Christmas. All the year some of you have been thinking, "I am going to send some money to Bob Jones University." So how about sending a Christmas gift? We are going to celebrate the Lord's birthday before long. If you will send in a contribution to help us make up our deficit, the money instead of being used to give some one just a little temporary thrill at Christmas, will be used for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has been good to you Christian people this year. You cannot count your blessings. You know our Lord told us to bear one another's burdens. Well, our Heavenly Father knows that we have carried for two years about the heaviest burden that ever weighed down on the tired shoulders of a tired man. You can help us bear this burden, and you can do this without any real sacrifice. All of you can send some amount. We are counting on you. You will not disappoint us. We have faith in God, and we have confidence in His children. Please let us hear from you.

BOB JONES

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from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

The shepherds did not say, "What a strange, unlikely tale!" The shepherds did not argue about whether the virgin-birth of Jesus, a miracle, was a biological possibility. No, they accepted the truth at once and said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." You remember the plain teaching of the Scripture that God has "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). How blessed are those spiritual babes who believe what God says! And how sad those sophisticated and arrogant scoffers who will believe nothing they have not seen or cannot explain, who judge everything by purely human and physical laws and make no room for God and miracles and spiritual truth!

If God were to work a miracle today in your town, you may be sure that very few would know it. When Jesus raised the twelve-year-old girl who had died, He shut out the official mourners and all the kinspeople and took the father and mother of the damsel, and Peter and James and John, behind closed doors to see her raised from the dead. When Peter raised Dorcas from the dead, he went in alone and shut the door and prayed. Only three people saw the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount and heard the voice of Moses and Elias as they talked with Jesus. When the Pharisees demanded that Jesus show them a sign, He refused, saying no sign should be given them but the sign of the resurrection (Matt. 12:39). When Herod commanded Jesus to work a miracle, Jesus said not a word (Luke 23:8, 9). You see, miracles are for people who believe in them. A Saviour is for people who know they need a Saviour. The good news of the gospel is not good news to anybody except those who believe it.

We may be sure, then, that it was the believing hearts of these shepherds that made them fit subjects for the mighty revelation of this first Christmas announcement by the angels. I have no doubt that learned Sadducees

who believed neither in miracles nor angels, missed entirely this glorious announcement and the angelic song that blazed from the sky over the fields. Sadducees did not look for a Saviour, would not have believed the message, would have explained away the appearance of the heavenly beings. If Jesus were to be born today, no Unitarian, no modernist, no evolutionist, no doubter of the Word of God would be in the fortunate group to be visited by angels and told of the Redeemer's birth! But to some

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The Angels' Christmas Message

(Continued from Page 5)

lowly, Bible-believing, hungry-hearted and longing soul, the glad news would be brought. How sorry I am for those who have, by their unbelief, tuned out from the radio of their minds all heavenly melodies, all glorious promises of the Saviour. How sad and how poor are those who are slow to believe! I do not wonder that later Jesus, after His resurrection, said to those who did not believe He was raised from the dead: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26). Those who are fools and slow of heart to believe will have no real Christmas this year nor any other year. All the Christmas carols, all the brightly lighted Christmas trees, all the sweet greetings of friends and loved ones, all the feasting at loaded tables are more or less empty forms to those who do not believe that Christ is the virgin-born Saviour and who have not trusted Him to save their own souls and given peace to their own tired and wretched hearts.

3. The angels' announcement was an invitation to those who would accept it.

Luke 2:16 says about the shepherds, "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

I am glad the shepherds went to see the baby Jesus! I am sure that the sheep rested untroubled and that not a wolf got a lamb that night as the shepherds left their flocks to see the longed-for and long-awaited Saviour! I think one reason that these shepherds were selected to hear the announcement was that God knew they would take time to go see the baby Jesus for themselves.

So many of God's offers of mercy are spurned. God has given a Bible, and people will not believe it. God has sent prophets and preachers, and people did not hear them. God has offered salvation, and people rejected it. God sent His Son, and not a home nor hotel in Bethlehem had room for Him to be born! I can well understand how God would want, this time, to tell somebody who would count it good news, who would believe it, and who would quickly come to rejoice over the baby Jesus. Later, the wise men would come from the East to bring their gold, frankincense, and myrrh and worship the Saviour. But all the heavenly hosts of angels had hearts bursting with praise that Christ had condescended to take on Himself the form of man and live and die for man's sins. Tonight it seems there had to be somebody to come to look into that holy baby's face with adoration. This birthnight, it seems that there had to be somebody to receive with suitable gladness and praise the gift God had given. And so God had the angels tell these shepherds who would go at once to see the baby Jesus.

When Jesus later rode on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He said about the shouting, praising children: "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40). And when Jesus died, the rocks rent and the earth trembled and graves were opened and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. There are certain divine events that could not be commonplace, and it seems that the earth itself would have rent asunder if someone did not recognize the mighty hand of God made bare. And the night when Jesus was born, it was a night for praise. The angels had to tell someone. So they told these believing shepherds who would go to see the Saviour.

Dear friend who reads these words, are you one who has heard the good news but did not accept it? Have you been told of the Saviour's birth but you have not yet come to see Him, to love Him and trust Him and receive Him for your own? Oh, hasten then to Jesus and see for yourself that what all the angels said is true. The praises of saints

and martyrs, priests and prophets, are justified. This happy Christmas season, go for yourself to look in the manger; see the face of the baby Jesus. And there you will find yourself looking into the tender, broken heart of God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, in that manger where the baby lay that day, the believing heart could see the coming of Calvary and a Saviour slain on a cross that we sinners might believe and be saved.

It is no Christmas where people talk about Jesus but do not love Him. It is no Christmas where people celebrate a day without knowing Jesus as their own Saviour. Away with the folly, the hypocrisy, the false tinsel of the commercialized Christmas without a Saviour! Make sure that this Christmas you come to the Saviour for yourself and know Him and trust Him and go away with His peace and joy, yea, with the Saviour Himself in your heart forever!

4. The shepherds spread the glad tidings.

Luke 2:17-20 tells us in thrilling words the reaction of the shepherds after they had hurried to the stable and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in the manger; "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

These glad shepherds "made known abroad" what the angel had told them about the baby Jesus. They returned, "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as was told unto them."

It was not a bad investment when the joyous angel appeared to the shepherds to reveal the birth of the Saviour. How many Christians there are who have heard the glad news themselves but have never told it to anybody! There is something wrong and wicked about learning good news intended for the whole race and keeping it for one's self only. The angel had told them that the glad tidings of great joy should be to all people, so they gladly went forth to tell what they had heard and seen.

"Go tell" is the very heart of all Christian duty. After one meets Jesus the command is always to go tell. When the Gadarene demoniac was wonderfully healed and sat, clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus, He wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus refused him, saying, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, as he hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19). And that great sinner, now saved, "departed and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel."

Jesus was deeply grieved because when he healed ten lepers only one of them, a Samaritan, returned to give him praise (Luke 17:12-18).

When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came the first Easter dawn and found an empty tomb, the angel, with a face like lightning and raiment white as snow, led the women gently to see the place where Jesus had lain and then said, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead..."

When Jesus healed the poor woman who had been afflicted with an issue of blood twelve years and had spent all of her living upon physicians but was humanly incurable, He demanded that she stand out and tell the assembled crowd for what cause she had touched Him and how she had been healed. You see, there is a fundamental duty to share a blessing which is intended for all. The shepherds would have been guilty and wicked had they withheld the glad news of

the Saviour's birth, since He was born for others too.

Do you remember the four lepers who sat outside the gates of the city of Samaria when it was besieged by the Syrians? Starving, in utter despair, they said, "Why sit we here until we die?" So in a boldness born of despair they went into the camp of the enemy, the Syrians, and there they found that God had so frightened the Syrians that they had run away leaving the tents full of food, with meals prepared, and had strewn their garments even to the Jordan river in their haste. And then we are told how these starving lepers feasted and then told others. "And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it, and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household" (II Kings 7:3, 9).

Those lepers were right. They said, "If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us." God will punish wicked people who withhold the blessing which was intended for others, too. The lepers carried the message to the starving, besieged city, and all were fed because the lepers feasted themselves and carried the good tidings that other starving souls might feast, too.

Can you imagine these happy shepherds telling of the birth of the Saviour? I suppose they rushed first to their own homes and waked wives and children, brothers and sisters, and told them, "The Saviour is born! We saw with our own eyes. The angel of the Lord appeared to us in the field and told us that we should find Him in a manger in Bethlehem. Then all the sky was filled with singing, praising angels. He is the Saviour, and this is the best news the world ever heard!" I think they told of the beauty of the baby. I have no doubt they marveled and told of the joy of salvation from sin that came into their own hearts as they believed the good news of the angels.

And it is well to note that these shepherds just continued to praise and glorify God. They did not so much go to tell the story as a matter of duty, I imagine, as the simple outpouring of their joy. They were glad and they could not keep silent. They were like Jeremiah, with a fire in his bones, like Paul who said, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." They were like the Apostles Peter and John after Pentecost, who said, "For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

Dear Christian, I suggest that if you find it difficult to testify for the Lord Jesus and what He has done for you, you have lost some of the wonder and joy that should be in your heart. Perhaps you have lost your first love. The gospel should be as sweet to you in the telling as it should be to the sinner who hears. Go back to the place of quiet waiting on God! Make sure that the joy of the Lord is fresh in your own heart. Like the Psalmist of old, get an anointing of fresh oil. Muse and meditate in the secret place until the fire burns warm in your own heart again. Count your blessings and praise God until your heart overflows. And then praise will be natural and sweet to you, and believable and interesting to your hearers.

At this Christmas season people talk about gifts and travel and visiting and fellowship, but too often words of praise for God come only haltingly from our lips. Too often even Christian people tell lying tales about Santa Claus and reindeer instead of rejoicing together over the work of the Saviour. Oh, God open the fountains of praise in our hearts! Oh, for the glad testimonies of people who have such joy that they cannot be silent about the Saviour!

III. The Message of the Angels

Now we come to the Christmas message itself. Here we find why

Christ came to earth. Here we learn the message we are to preach. In Luke 2:10, 11 we learn the angels' message: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

1. First of all, this message is "to all people," that is, to the whole world.

The message the angel gave the shepherds is the same message God has for the world nineteen and a half centuries later.

The message the angel gave to the lowly shepherds is the same message He has for all society. "God so loved the world," the whole wide world, every one of the billions of souls ever born in the world, that He gave Jesus to be born at Bethlehem and to die at Calvary.

Here is the Great Commission in the announcement of the angel in the field near Bethlehem, just as true as Jesus gave it to the disciples after His resurrection. We have a message to tell to the nations, and no Christian has done his duty until he does all he can to see that the last creature on earth hears the gospel. The angel's message is as much for one who reads these words today as for the shepherds in the field that starry Christmas night! The Saviour wants to be your Saviour. He wants the joy to be your joy.

2. It is as a Saviour for sinners that Jesus came.

The angel said, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour!"

Jesus did not come as a teacher, though he often taught the people and "He spake as never man spake." The world has other teachers, even other teachers sent from God, like the holy men who wrote the Scripture, and all of God's prophets. But Jesus did not come as a teacher. He came as a Saviour. In I Timothy 1:15 the Apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, writes, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." And Jesus Himself said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus said plainly that God's love gift to the world was in order "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus did not come as a teacher, a philosopher, but to save people from their sins. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," Jesus abruptly answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). What Nicodemus needed was not a teacher but a Saviour. He did not need a pattern; he needed a Redeemer.

Jesus did not come to civilize the world, to change society as a whole, to stop wars and crime and poverty. The modernists who leave off revivals, who stop having supernatural conversions, and talk piously of the church "bringing in the kingdom of God," have utterly missed the point of the gospel, the point of Jesus' coming. Jesus came to save individual sinners from Hell. He came to make black hearts white in the blood, came to give new life to those dead in trespasses and sins. Joseph was told by the angel, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit and with the baby John in his arms, prophesied, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:16, 77). The angel announced to the shepherds, and we should always emphasize his message, that "Unto you is born... a Saviour."

It is true that Jesus Christ and Christianity have been the greatest influence for civilization in all the world. Regenerated Christian hearts live as unsaved men cannot live. Men who are born again, saved by the blood of Christ, have done all the best of

the world's literature, and art, and culture. Genuine Bible-believing Christianity has mothered education, has sent missionaries around the world to civilize while they preach the gospel. Bible-believing Christianity as held by saved, forgiven, born-again sinners, has founded orphanages and hospitals, has sponsored peace movements, has taught the protection of the weak and the care of the helpless, and has earnestly and powerfully preached moral righteousness. But the first and most important thing that Jesus does for anybody is to save his soul, forgiving his sins and changing his heart.

And it is very important to remember that all the changes made in human society by Christianity and the gospel were made by the old, old gospel, not by the modern so-called social gospel of unbelievers and infidels who reject the deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Bible. Modernists save no drunken bums on the Bowery in New York City. They cannot change individuals from sinners to saints. Modernists do not change society because they do not change the human heart. These unbelievers in the church have only the carnal mind which is enmity against God and cannot be subject to the law of God because of spiritual blindness. That is why they try to change men without regeneration. That is why they try to change society without changing men. That is why modernists and liberals blindly swallow the propaganda of Communism and foolishly try to involve the church in consumer co-operative ventures, in a fight against free enterprise, and co-operate with infidels to exchange God's plan of free enterprise for socialism.

The name of Jesus means Saviour, and Jesus came to save. No one really has Jesus until he has Him as a Saviour in his own heart and has his own sins forgiven and his soul saved.

The most important thing for each reader this Christmas time is that he may make sure that he has come to Jesus as a poor lost sinner needing saving and that by faith he has accepted and received Jesus into his own heart as the Forgiver of his sins, the Pardoner of his transgressions, the Saviour of his soul.

3. The child born is Christ the Lord, God incarnate.

The Baby Jesus was not like other babies in one respect. This baby is God come in human form! Here is the Creator of the world wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger! For the angel took pains to say that this Saviour born in the city of David "is Christ the Lord." Jesus is the Christ of the Old Testament, foretold as the anointed one (Messiah) of the second Psalm. He is the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, of Genesis 3:15. He is the prophet like unto Moses of Deuteronomy 18:15. He is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, on whom the Lord has laid all our iniquities and by whose stripes we are healed. He is the Lamb that Abraham said God would provide himself for a burnt offering (Genesis 22:8). In fact Christ is the object pictured in all the sacrifices; the lamb, the ram, the scape goat, the red heifer, the bullock, the turtle dove, the pigeon. The blood of all the bulls and goats pictured the Lamb of God which should take away the sin of the world. Jesus is the high priest pictured by Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Jesus is the Son given, upon whose shoulders shall rest the government of the world when David's throne is restored at Jerusalem. "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). I say, the Baby Jesus was not born as are other babies. He had no human father. For the angel had said unto Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). And the angel said unto Joseph, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto

(Continued on Page 7)

The Angels' Christmas Message

(Continued from Page 6)

thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20, 21). And we are told that all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, chapter 7 verse 14, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

And we may be sure that when the shepherds gazed into the baby face of Jesus they looked with awe. Doubtless they knelt and worshipped Him as did the wise men. For He is Immanuel, God with us, Christ the Lord. There is no real Christmas for anyone who does not admit that Jesus is God and who does not bow to Him as Lord.

I believe that the shepherds went away after perfect surrender of hearts to this message, this Christ, this Lord. They ignored their defenseless flocks in the field to tell the good news. I think their hearts had knelt to Jesus. I think their wills had surrendered to Him. I think they had taken Him into the throne room of their hearts to be Lord of their lives. And that is what I hope every reader will do this Christmas time. Let Jesus sit with you at the Christmas feast; yes, let Him be verily the head of the house. Let Jesus preside at the Christmas tree and make sure that every gift and every carol and all the fellowship is subject to His approval and controlled by His will. I wish my knees could bow in that lowly stable before the manger today! I long to give myself anew to the Lord Christ who came that happy night. Let us not only trust Jesus as Saviour but let us surrender to Him and exalt Him as Lord and Master, as Christ and God. Have thy blessed way with our hearts, O Christ Jesus, this Christmas time and forever!

Go Meet the Saviour Today

It was wonderful news that the Saviour was born in Bethlehem. But the angel gave specific instructions as to how they should find and know the Baby Jesus. "And this shall be a sign unto you," the angel said, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). And sure enough, "They came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" (Luke 2:16). What a pity to hear about Jesus and never know Him as your Saviour! How sad these shepherds would have been in after life if they had not come to see for themselves the babe in the manger of whom the angels had told them.

Well, it is Christmas time and in many ways that is the happiest time in the world to accept Christ as your own Saviour. He is God's "unspeakable gift," given to a sinning, dying world, given to you. It is not good manners to reject a Christmas gift. When a gift has cost love and care and great expense, it would be a callous heart indeed that would refuse it and break the loving heart of the giver. But God offers you His own Son. God let Him die on the cross for your sin. Jesus Himself is God's Christmas gift and He brings with Him forgiveness and peace of mind, and a new life within and the great and sure

hope of eternal blessedness hereafter. Everlasting life is yours as a free gift if you will take it today.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). And again we are told in I John 5:11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

God furnishes the Saviour free. All you need to do is to furnish the sinner. Are you willing to confess yourself a sinner and come to Christ for salvation? Are you willing to receive Him into your heart today? The very moment that you open your heart and trust Him to forgive your sins and take Him as your own Saviour He will come in and make you God's child and give you everlasting life.

If you will take Christ as your own Saviour I am anxious to hear from you. First say "Yes" in your heart to God. Honestly surrender yourself to Christ, and trust Him to be your own Saviour. Then would you sign the statement below, as a covenant between you and God? Then copy the letter, if you will, and mail it to me. I will rejoice with you in your salvation and will send you a letter of comfort and counsel. Oh, I hope to hear from many of you who take Christ as Saviour just here and now as you read this message from God. Here is the statement; will you honestly decide today and sign your name to it, taking Christ as your own Saviour this Christmas time?

Evangelist John R. Rice
Editor, THE SWORD OF THE LORD

214 West Wesley Street
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Dr. Rice:

I have read your Christmas message, "The Angels' Christmas Message" in THE SWORD OF THE LORD. I realize I have been a poor lost sinner. I thank God that He gave His Son Jesus Christ to be a Saviour. So at this glad Christmas time I here and now accept Jesus as my Saviour. I repent of my sins and trust Him to save my soul. With all My heart this moment I invite Jesus into my heart and turn myself over to Him and claim Him as my Saviour. I write you as my confession of faith in Christ. I will claim Him as my Saviour and try to live for Him the rest of my life.

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A Happy Way to Celebrate

By the Editor

Christmas time is a time of real celebration and joy to me. We plan to close the revival campaign at Lewistown, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, December 14, and take a Pennsylvania train soon after midnight and we should arrive in Chicago and then in Wheaton Monday afternoon, December 15. Saturday night, December 20, I am promised to speak for St. Louis Youth for Christ, and on Christmas day I am invited and may accept the invitation to speak at the Pacific Garden Mission at noon. Then December 28 I go to Evansville Rescue Mission for a happy time. But you can see that that leaves me most of two weeks of fellowship with my family and workers in Wheaton. My lonely heart leaps at the thought of going home at the Christmas time. There will be work, of course; hard work nearly every day, but I will see many loved ones. I will eat my wife's cooking. I will sing carols with my children. I will greet all my workers and have prayer meetings with them over the work and plan how we can get out the gospel to more people around the world through THE SWORD OF THE LORD, books and pamphlets. Christmas is a happy time.

And always at the Christmas season I get to preach a good many times. And nearly always I preach on some phase of the Christmas story; "No Room in the Inn," the shepherds, the virgin birth, the angels' message, or the wise men from the East. Then usually I am so thrilled and filled with thoughts of the Saviour's birth, His incarnation that I go on preaching about Christmas for several days into the new year! Christmas is certainly a time for celebration with me.

I believe that one of the best ways to celebrate Christmas for me is, to see how I can get out the gospel in print to more people. And that will be the theme of much of my praying and planning and counseling during those days. And I suggest that you, too, if you love the Lord Jesus and love His message of salvation and revival, celebrate Christmas by sending THE SWORD

OF THE LORD to as many people as possible.

Thousands of you who read have received Christmas gifts of money. I beg of you, use some of the money to send THE SWORD OF THE LORD to others. Spread the blessings you yourself have gotten by subscribing for others.

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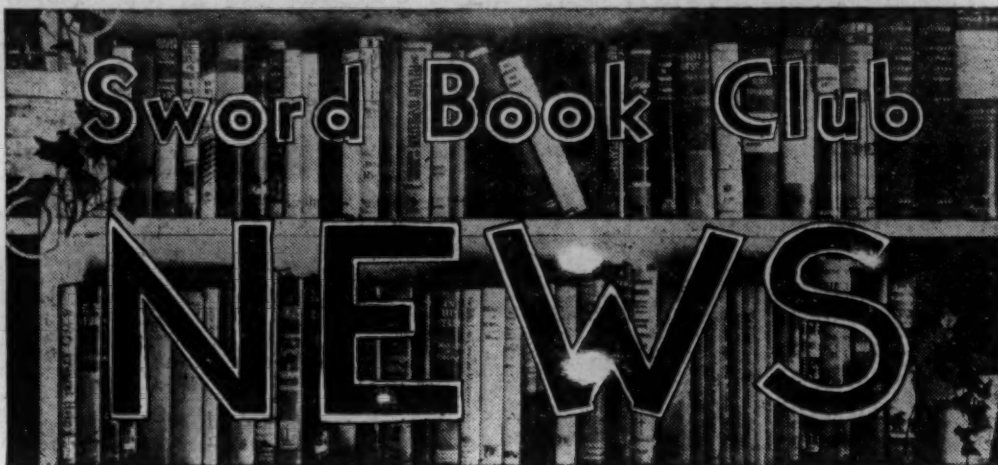
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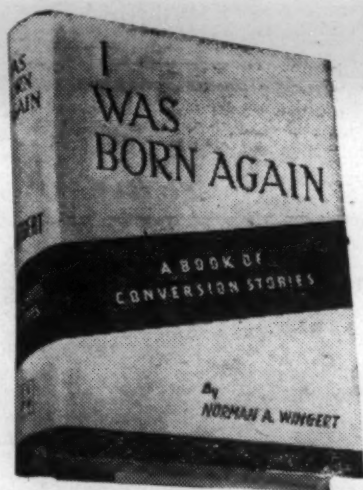
This is a big book, with seventy-eight stories of conversion and blessing. There are 253 pages. A book you will read and re-read, lend and give and be blessed by.

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Dr. Harry Rimmer says, "Every Christian who does personal work will get blessing and inspiration from these conversion stories when it is seen how well personal evangelism works". And we add that those who do not do personal work will be inspired and encouraged to do it.

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About the Author

Norman A. Wingert is Professor of Religion at Beulah College in Upland, California. He was for a number of years a social worker in the city of Chicago. His love for Christ, and for people qualified him for and undoubtedly helped him compile this book of twentieth century miracles of God's grace.

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